

He Knew He Was Unfaithful By Paul R. Blake

"Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, and reigned twelve years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like his father and mother, for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jereboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them" (2Kings 3:1-3). King Jehoram was a man of half measures who tried to live two lives at the same time. He had the terrible misfortune of witnessing the gruesome deaths of his father and mother, Ahab and Jezebel; yet in spite of this he failed to purge Israel of all remnants of his parents' idolatry. He was trying to live partly by God's law and partly by the religion of his father. I submit to you that he knew that he was not faithful. He just hoped that his half measures would be accepted.

He knew that he wasn't living right. When his father Ahab died, the king of Moab attacked Israel before Jehoram had even broken in his new crown. Jehoram called for help from Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, who not only agreed to fight with him, but also gave him some wise counsel as to the direction of the march. Jehoram knew full well that he wasn't up to the task of leadership and allowed the king of Judah to lead instead. He knew he was displeasing to God.

Along the way, the armies ran out of water and there was none to be found on this lengthy desert route. Jehoram instantly concluded that God had brought them out into the desert to perish. Apparently his conscience was bothering him, and he knew that he was unfaithful. Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of the Lord, and Elisha came to him. Elisha addressed Jehoram thusly: "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother" (2Kings 3:13). Jehoram knew better and continued to appeal to Elisha for a prophetic response. Elisha told Jehoram that if it weren't for the fact that Jehoshaphat king of Judah was standing there, he wouldn't even be seeing Jehoram, let alone speak to him. Jehoram knew he was unfaithful.

Later, the Lord brought forth water in the desert for the combined armies and all of their animals. Elisha said that giving them water was trivial compared to the victory He would give them over Moab. The Moabites suffered such a defeat that their king offered his firstborn son in sacrifice hoping that it would stop the slaughter. Yet after being a participant and witness to the hand of the Lord, Jehoram went on to remain a half measure king; respecting Elisha, but never completely becoming faithful. He went to his grave and the Biblical record reads "he did that which was evil in the sight of God." The Lord did not give him credit for his half service. He knew that he was unfaithful.

Does the spirit of Jehoram live on in people today? Are there any "half measure" children of God who know that they are unfaithful, but secretly hope that their half service will somehow be enough to secure a little home in heaven? Indeed there are. Jehoram's attitude is manifest in those who attend a token number of services. They come enough to be known as members, enough to avoid being disciplined, but not enough to be laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Jehoram's spirit is seen in the manner of the token contributors who put in enough to keep from being embarrassed by those who pass the plate, but not enough to be truly giving of their means. It is seen in those

who are honest and pure of speech with other Christians, but who curse, gossip, and lie before the world. Oh yes, the tradition of Jehoram's half measure service is alive to this very hour.

Moreover, those who live Jehoram's way before God know that they are unfaithful, too. It is seen in their angry response when a caring brother tries to admonish them to greater devotion. When physically sick, it is seen in their desire for the preacher and elders to visit and pray with them. When dying, it is seen in their call for a sound preacher to present the funeral lesson. When in fear, it is seen in prayers and Bible hugging. But when times are good, they return to half measure service. They know that they are unfaithful. And so does God.

Escape the Oncoming Fire

Someone once wrote that when men see a prairie fire coming, what can they do? They cannot outrun it -- not even on the fastest horse. What they do is take a match and burn a large area around them. Then they can enter this burnt area and be safe from the oncoming flames -- for where they stand, the fires have already passed.

Almost two millennia ago, Christ stood in our place, suffering for the sins of the world. On the cross, he suffered torture from His tormentors, hanging where the fires of punishment overwhelmed Him; if we will, therefore, go to the cross of Jesus, we can be where the fires of punishment have passed over already, and we will escape the oncoming eternal punishment of sin.

Reverend Who?!

Psalm 111:9 - "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."

"Q. Who was the first minister to be addressed as "Reverend"?

A. One Thomas Blake. So titled by his flock on June 11, 1657, according to records left by his descendants, of whom there are many, I might add. Numerous Blakes trace back to the original Reverend." (Beaver County Times, August 1995)

Do It Anyway

People are illogical, unreasonable and self-centered. Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfishness or ulterior motives. Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest ideas. Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs, but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

People really do need help but may attack you if you help them. Help them anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you may get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.

A Moments Wisdom

Goodness is easier to recognize than to define.

Good can imagine Evil; but Evil cannot imagine Good.

A man is only as good as what he loves.

When good people in any country cease their vigilance and struggle, the evil men prevail.

Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who know me best, that I have always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow.

The omission of good is no less reprehensible than the commission of evil.

All the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single good deed.

What we give to the poor for Christ's sake is what we carry with us when we die.

Sin is anything that separates us from God. If we are so good that we don't feel any need for God's mercy, then our goodness is sin.

Let us not paralyze our own capacity for good by brooding over man's capacity for evil.

The best portion of a good man's life are his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.

By perseverance the snails reached the ark.